



**SPECIAL COMMON COUNCIL MEETING  
QUESTIONS TO DIRECTORS WORKSHOP**

**MONDAY, APRIL 4, 2022  
6:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

A Special Meeting of the Common Council of the City of Middletown, Questions to Directors, was held on Monday, April 4, 2022, beginning at 6:00 PM. This meeting was a hybrid meeting with in-person participation in the Common Council Chamber and remote access via WebEx. The meeting was also simultaneously livestreamed on local cable access television, on the City's webpage and on the City's Facebook page.

**Present:**

Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell	Councilman Anthony Mangiafico
Councilwoman Meghan Carta	Councilman Edward McKeon
Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.	Councilman Eugene Nocera
Councilman Darnell Ford	Councilman Philip Pessina
Councilman Anthony Gennaro, Sr.	Councilwoman Linda Salafia
Councilman Vincent Loffredo	
Mayor Benjamin D. Florsheim, Chair	
Daniel Ryan, Esq. Corporation Counsel	
Linda Reed, Clerk of the Common Council	
Officer Kurt Scrivo, Sargent-at-Arms	

**Absent:** Councilman Edward Ford, Jr.

**Also Present:**

Arts & Culture – Kisha Michael, Coordinator  
Chief of Staff -- Barbara Knoll Peterson  
City & Town Clerk – Ashley Flynn-Natale, CCTC  
Communications – Wayne Bartolotta, Director  
Economic & Community Development – Joseph Samolis, Director  
Equal Opportunity & Diversity Management – Faith Jackson, Director  
Finance & Revenue Services – Carl Erlacher, CPA, Director  
Fire Department – Jay Woron, Fire Chief  
General Counsel – Brig Smith, Esq.  
Health Department – Kevin Elak, Acting Director  
Human Resources – Justin Richardson, Director  
Land Use – Marek Kozikowski, Director  
Library – Ramona Burkey, Director  
Mayor's Chief of Staff – Barbara Knoll Peterson  
Police Department – Chief Erik Costa  
Public Works – Christopher Holden, PE, Acting Director  
Public Works – Rohan Manning, Acting Deputy Director  
Recreation & Community Services – Catherine Lechowicz, Director  
Technology Services, Bryan Skowera  
Water & Sewer Department -- Joseph Fazzino, Director  
Youth Services – Justin Carbonella, MPA, Coordinator

**Absent:** Damon Braasch, CCMA II, Assessor; Kevin Elak, Acting Director of Health

**Public:** online: unknown

**WebEx:** 1

**Facebook:** unknown

**1. Call to Order**

Mayor Benjamin Florsheim calls the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He welcomes everyone to the Special Meeting of the Common Council, Questions to Directors, including some special reports. The Chair asks Councilman Philip Pessina to lead the Common Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Clerk of the Common Council reads the Call of the Meeting and the Chair declares the call a legal call and the meeting a legal meeting.

**2. Reports**

- A. Motion to waive the Common Council Rules of Procedure to receive special reports -- Health Department Covid-19 Update Report and Office of General Counsel Report on the Board of Education/City Split, Effective July 1, 2022 -- and, if needed, ask questions about these reports, items which are not on the Common Council's Regular Meeting agenda.**

**APPROVED**

Councilman Vincent Loffredo moves to waive the Common Council *Rules of Procedure* to receive special reports -- Health Department Covid-19 Update Report and Office of General Counsel Report on the Board of Education/City Split, Effective July 1, 2022 -- and, if needed, ask questions about these reports, items which are not on the Common Council's Regular Meeting agenda. Councilman Philip Pessina seconds the motion.

There being no discussion, the Chair calls for a voice vote. The motion is approved unanimously by a vote of 11-0 (AYE: Councilmembers Blackwell, Carta, Faulkner, D. Ford, Gennaro, Loffredo, Mangiafico, McKeon, Nocera, Pessina, and Salafia; ABSENT: Councilman E. Ford). The matter is approved.

**B. Report of Covid from Acting Director of Health, Kevin Elak**

The Clerk of the Common Council notes that Acting Director Kevin Elak is not present this evening, adding that it appeared that he was not attending this evening.

The Chair agrees and moves on to the next agenda item.

**C. Report on the Board of Education/ City Split, Effective July 1, 2022 – Office of General Counsel Brig Smith, Esq.**

General Counsel Brig Smith states that he does not have much to add to last month's report. They continue to work with the Board of Education HR to transition over so they can go fully live on July 1<sup>st</sup>. He states that they are making great progress in that regard. They have transitioned over the grieving processes, the posting processes, and just today, continuing the full transition, which they expect to have fully complete by the end of this week, they are making good progress and do not anticipate having any problems when they go fully live on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Local 466, the Board of Education and the City continue to make progress on negotiating the actual transfer and creation of a separate local come July 1<sup>st</sup>. He is happy to answer any questions, adding that is the limited update that he has.

The Chair calls of Councilman Vincent Loffredo.

Councilman Loffredo asks who at the Board of Education has the responsibility or who they are meeting with to take on the responsibility in light of the Charter change.

Attorney Smith replies that it is Gene Thazhampallath and Katie Ellers at the Board of Education.

Councilman Loffredo replies that he (Gene Thazhampallath) is the HR person.

Attorney Smith replies that he (Gene Thazhampallath) is the Human Resources Manager, he thinks, or Director of Talent.

Councilman Loffredo asks who the other person is.

Attorney Smith replies, "Katie Ellers."

Councilman Loffredo asks what her title is.

Attorney Smith apologizes that he does not know, adding that they transitioned over to separate titles recently, but does not know the actual nomenclature.

Councilman Loffredo states that there is collective bargaining that Attorney Smith mentions, working with Local 466 on the City side. He asks if this is something that will go to the Common Council or go to the Board of Education and then back to the Council. What are the logistics for action, if any, at this point, that the Council may have to take?

Attorney Smith replies that he cannot go into too much detail as to what is going on at the table. The Council will have before it a contract to review and ratify under MERA (Municipal Employee Relations Act) that would be the 466 contract. There is separately with the Board of Education, who is leading the discussions with regard to the former non-certified City employees becoming full BOE employees and forming potentially a separate union over there. That is all separate to the BOE side. They will deal with that separately. On the City side, it will continue with ratification of the 466 contract he would presume. It will hopefully be by July 1.

Councilman Loffredo asks if 466 is in the process of negotiating a renewal contact with the City. Is that what is being said?

Attorney Smith replies that it is all tied together. The existing 466 contract expires on June 30<sup>th</sup>. One way or the other, they have to negotiate and figure out what will happen with a successor agreement. As we



AGENCY NAME	
1	Water and Sewer
2	545 Main Realty, LLC
3	Recreation and Community Services/Arts
4	Russell Library
5	Middlesex Chamber
6	Gilead Commuity Services, Inc.
7	Northern Middlesex YMCA
8	Paws at Home LLC
9	Middlesex Health
10	DCF of Main Street 420, LLC
11	DCF of Main Street 428, LLC
12	DCF of Middletown, LLC
13	JDS Holdings
14	Community Health Center, Inc.

This is the status of the projects, noting that there have been five (5) presentations to the Task Force. There are three (3) more scheduled for the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and about half dozen more applications received, but not yet scheduled for a hearing.

AGENCY NAME		STATUS
1	Water and Sewer	Application Received
2	545 Main Realty, LLC	Presented on 2/9/22
3	Recreation and Community Services/Arts	Presented on 2/23/22
4	Russell Library	Presented on 2/23/22
5	Middlesex Chamber	Presented on 3/9/22
6	Gilead Commuity Services, Inc.	Presented on 3/9/22
7	Northern Middlesex YMCA	Presentation scheduled 4/13/22
8	Paws at Home LLC	Presentation scheduled 4/13/22
9	Middlesex Health	Presentation scheduled 4/13/22
10	DCF of Main Street 420, LLC	Application Received
11	DCF of Main Street 428, LLC	Application Received
12	DCF of Middletown, LLC	Application Received
13	JDS Holdings	Application Received
14	Community Health Center, Inc.	Application Received

There is another column called “Application Type” with a number and letter, which he will explain. Largely, it corresponds with the categories that appear in the American Rescue Plan Act. This is the amount request, the number or people impacted, and the potential urgency of the program.

AGENCY NAME	APPLICATION TYPE	AMOUNT REQUESTED	NUMBER OF PEOPLE IMPACTED	URGENCY
Water and Sewer	D.1	\$ 2,750,000.00		
545 Main Realty, LLC	C	\$ 1,500,000.00		
Recreation and Community Services/Arts	A.2.g	\$ 491,400.00		
Russell Library	A.2.g	\$ 250,000.00		
Middlesex Chamber	A.2.d, g	\$ 181,290.00		
Gilead Commuity Services, Inc.	A.1.c	\$ 299,826.22		
Northern Middlesex YMCA	A.1.a	\$ 350,000.00		
Paws at Home LLC	A.2.g	\$ 2,000,000.00		
Middlesex Health	A.1.c	\$ 321,000.00		
DCF of Main Street 420, LLC	C	\$ 1,515,750.00		
DCF of Main Street 428, LLC	C	\$ 1,915,735.00		
DCF of Middletown, LLC	C	\$ 1,190,500.00		
JDS Holdings	A.1.d.f.g; C	\$ 600,000.00		
Community Health Center, Inc.	A.1.c	\$ 249,445.50		

These are the numbers and letters that he was discussing. One category is public health and economic impacts. Another is premium pay. C is Revenue Los and D is revenue loss and infrastructure.

APPLICATION TYPE	
A	Public Health and Economic Impacts
1	Responding to COVID-19
a	COVID-19 Mitigation and Prevention
b	Medical Expenses
c	Behavioral Health
d	Public Health and Safety
e	Expenses to Improve the Design and Execution of Health and Public Health Programs
2	Responding to Negative Economic Impacts
a	Assistance to Unemployed Workers
b	Assistance to Households
c	Expenses to Improve Efficacy of Economic Relief Programs
d	Small Business and Nonprofit
e	Rehiring State, Local, and Tribal Government Staff
f	Aid to Impacted Industries
g	Building Stronger Communities
h	Addressing Educational Disparities
i	Promoting Healthy Childhood Environments
B	Premium Pay
C	Revenue Loss
D	Investments in Infrastructure
1	Water and Sewer Infrastructure
2	Broadband Infrastructure

As you know from having dealt with this Act at some level of abstraction, there are some categories within each of those. The idea of the rubric is to fit into one of those boxes, or a couple of those boxes, what people are really asking for. All of this is a long and fancy way of saying that we are looking for a nexus between the pandemic and its after effects and the attempt to recover from it. All of these categories are trying to draw that connection, build that bridge. Now, he mentioned the categories that they are looking at to be graded from 1 to 10. The first is the number of people impacted. One is that there is no impact at all and 10 is that here is a community-wide impact. Second is urgency: how urgent is that need. One is not urgent; 10 is immediately urgent. Readiness to proceed: can they put a shovel in the ground immediately, again, 1 to 10. Budget and funding: again, do they have money aside from just asking us, separate sources of money. And finally, the project, the agency, the track record, have they done this before; do we have faith that they can do something like this going forward.

<u>NUMBER OF PEOPLE IMPACTED</u>									
Rank the project by the number of people impacted from 1 to 10, "1" being no impact and "10" being community wide.									
<u>URGENCY</u>									
Rank the urgency of the project using 1 through 10, "1" being not urgent, "10" being immediate need.									
<u>READINESS TO PROCEED</u>									
Rank the readiness of the project using 1 through 10, "1" being not ready, "10" being immediate implementation.									
<u>BUDGET/FUNDING</u>									
Rank the project's budgeting, is the project properly budgeted and have their been other sources of funding identified? Use 1 through 10, "1" being that the budget and financing is incomplete, "10" being all costs are accounted for and funding sources identified and secured.									
<u>PROJECT/AGENCY FEASIBILITY</u>									
Rank the Agency's ability to carryout the project using past experience, using 1 through 10. "1" being that the agency has little to no experience carrying a project of this type, "10" being the agency has a proven past of doing similar projects and have been compliant with all past requirements.									

The working group is four (4) people, meeting regularly, to look and these and come up with some sort of triage for the entire Task Force. They will report back at the upcoming April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, he expects that for each of the upcoming meetings with the full Task Force. Hopefully, that is it in a nutshell. He is happy to answer any questions.

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo.

Councilman Loffredo asks, on this issue, there are regulations formulated by the Feds, the Federal government. He has been reading what has happened in other communities and what sticks out with problems. West Haven just recently did another detailed report on what they expended. The Office of Policy & Management did that study of how the money was spend to how the money was being awarded was not qualified. He knows that Attorney Smith is working with his colleagues throughout the State. He understands the rubric, but folks who are proposing X, Y, and Z and, as they are being evaluated, to what degree, whoever the evaluators are in terms of himself and others on the committee. In terms of making sure that we are complying with the law and don't find ourselves in trouble for misappropriation or allocation of funds that money was never intended for. He asks what kind of assurances are being built into this process to help make sure that we don't fall into that problem.

Attorney Smith replies that the first assurance is the rubric itself, which sort of forces the Task Force into organized thinking and one of the boxes. The second thing is all of the education that we have done, looking at the guidelines, looking at the secondary guidance, to talk with the Connecticut Association of Municipal Attorneys, to talk with CCM (Connecticut Conference of Municipalities). We are all learning this together as we go. To reset the table, we have about \$21M worth of Federal funds allocated for Middletown based on our size. Of that \$21M, the Council has only appropriated so far \$2.75M. You may recall that these were immediate Water and Sewer needs. We authorized expenditures for three (3) basins that were really bad news and the architectural and engineering project. We have already appropriated that and those contracts are in process. Now, with respect to that, it is clearly the water and sewer infrastructure, which is very clearly allowed. It is a City department. That is pretty cut and dry. One of the things is, since we last talked about this, the final rule from Treasury came out and the final rule allows \$10M option where we don't have to fit something into one of those boxes completely. What you have to be able to do is to show it in the nexus. He believes that the reason the Treasury Department did that is because they heard from a lot of Congress people, saying that their constituents cannot find ways to spend this money because the categories are so narrow that, unless we are just going to do water and sewer, or broadband, there is not a good opportunity. There should be an opportunity. Hopefully once in a lifetime that we have an expenditure from the federal government like this. We have a little more wiggle room, but, again, the wiggle room has to be limited and we have to be able to show that nexus. That is what we are doing. We are looking, as a working group, to show what that nexus might be. The Task Force will have to evaluate that nexus. The more egregious issues that we want to avoid, anybody on the Task Force, who has a potential conflict of interest, of course, will recuse themselves. They will not be voting on their own agencies if their agencies is, in fact, submit for funding. So he is reasonably confident that they will be able to avoid some of the worst of the worse. With respect to the close clause, we expect to be in communication with CCM with CAMA and with (*inaudible*). Knock on wood, we should be okay.

Councilman Loffredo has one follow-up questions. Have you received the final regulation from the Feds or is there another rendition expected next week or next month? Are we final as of today?

Attorney Smith replies that the final rule has been promulgated and in in effect.

The Chair states that we next have Councilwoman Linda Salafia followed by Councilman Edward McKeon, followed by Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell.

Councilwoman Linda Salafia asks Attorney Smith if he is going to send them what he just showed the.

Attorney Smith replies that he already provided it with the Council Clerk, but will do so, if they have not.

The Council Clerk replies that the only version that the Council Office received is a blank spreadsheet, not one that is filled out.

Attorney Smith replies that he will get a filled out version to them.

The Chair calls on Councilman Edward McKeon.

Councilman Edward McKeon states that they were discussing this in the caucus. The mathematics of it intrigues them. You have \$21M and spend a certain amount on water and sewer. He does not know what all of the requests add up to, but he asks if they have thought how all of this will be presented to the Council for approval. Is it going to be that you get close to the number with eight (8) or 10 applicants and then approve all? Will there be some mathematical juggling?

Attorey Smith replies that this is a topic that he expects the Task Force, itself, to address on April 13<sup>th</sup> and going forward. The total ask so far is well below the \$21M that they have. There has been no application deadline set so anybody can go to the City website. Simply Google City of Middletown ARPA application and it will pull the website up directly and an application can be submitted that way. These are the things that the Task Force itself will have to review and decide. Are they going to have a cutoff? Are they going to approve projects on a rolling basis or run them all together? And then decide of the 14 or 20 they take this many? Ultimately, it will be up to the Council to determine whether or not to appropriate the money. So the Council will have the final say. The Task Force is just making recommendations.

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell, noting that her question may have been answered.

Councilwoman Blackwell replies that her question was asked by Councilwoman Salafia.

The Chair asks if there are any additional questions for Attorney Smith.

Councilman Loffredo replies, "No," asking for another director.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.

Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr, asks if some of the \$21M is for the Board of Education.

Attorney Smith replies, "No," adding that the Board of Education has a separate allocation of \$8M or \$9M, noting that the City has nothing to do with that.

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo, adding that he has questions for another director.

Councilman Loffredo asks for Fire Chief John Woron. Councilman Loffredo notes that the Council has revived detailed information about the protective clothing. He asks that Chief Woron clarify and explain the need for the clothing that he is talking about.

#### **PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**

*The Middletown Fire Department is looking to replace structural firefighting gear that is no longer age compliant.*

*The Middletown Fire Department adheres to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1971 Standard for Protective Firefighting Clothing. NFPA 1971 is a recognized industry standard throughout the fire service. NFPA 1971 requires structural firefighting gear to be no older than ten years old.*

*Currently 67 members of the Middletown Fire Department have two sets of structural firefighting gear (protective coat and pants). As of this date three members of the Fire Marshal's Office and the Fire Chief's first sets of protective clothing is older than the NFPA 1971 compliance standard. Our other 63 member's first sets of protective clothing are currently compliant.*

*One of my visions as Fire Chief was to initiate cancer reduction initiatives to enhance our current Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's). Currently any member of the Middletown Fire Department that operates in a smoke or toxic environment is required to change out of that set of structural firefighting gear upon return to quarters. Each firefighter is required to wash that set of protective clothing in one of our special extractor washing machines. These extractor washing machines are designed to remove the toxins and carcinogens from the firefighting gear. While this gear is being washed and air dried the firefighters are required to place their back-up structural gear into service. Our new initiatives also require our personnel to change their station wear, shower with special soap, hydrate and take in nutrition.*

*Currently 42 member's spare structural firefighting gear is older than ten years old. Routinely members are changing into firefighting gear that is OSHA non-compliant. This creates a huge liability not only to the Middletown Fire Department but also the City of Middletown.*

*On March 16, 2022 the Middletown Fire Department responded to a second alarm fire on Clinton Avenue. Upon arrival the MFD was notified of people trapped in the one of the fire buildings three members of the MFD while making a push to search for the trapped occupants were burned. Before they were transported to the hospital they were required to leave their protective clothing at the scene. Because firefighters were injured the Office of the State Fire Marshal's responded to investigate the injuries. The members gear was inspected and the manufacturer build date and information was photographed. This information was also forwarded to OSHA to ensure gear compliance.*

*On March 17, 2022 OSHA paid a visit to the Middletown Fire Department to conduct an inquiry into how our three firefighters were injured. If any of our three injured firefighters has been wearing non-compliant structural firefighting gear the City of Middletown would have been issued a citation and fine from OSHA. In the 2021-2022 Middletown Fire Department budget eight sets of new structural firefighting gear was purchased.*

*This fund balance transfer will provide the funding to buy the remaining 59 sets of protective structural clothing. This purchase requires a fund balance transfer of \$261,000.*

*Thank you*

*Jay Woron  
Fire Chief  
Middletown Fire Department*

Fire Chief John Worn states that the request is a budget transfer from the Fund Balance to purchase 59 sets of protective clothing. There are 67 firefighters, who wear protective clothing and have two (2) full sets. Per OSHA, they are only good for 10 years and are then decommissioned. Of the 67 firefighters, three (3) fire marshals, and, up to today, himself, had expired. Everyone else – the other 63 members – had their first set of gear compliant. Forty-two (42) separate sets of gear are older than 10 years and non-compliant. Speaking with the Mayor's Office and Public Safety, they decided to go for an order for 59 sets of gear to bring them into compliance. He has a couple of sets of turnout clothing. This is his older coat, which is now non-compliant and this is one of the new sets, adding that they bought eight (8) sets out of this year's budget. This is a brand new set that came in today. Quickly, how turnout gear works, whether the coat or pants: it has an outer layer, which is a protective barrier to the two (2) inner layers. The inner layers are a vapor barrier, the white inner layer. It is a material that breaths. It tries to keep moisture out, but will also, when sweating, will allow sweat to evaporate back out of the inner liner, which is called the thermal liner. The thermal liner, which I easier to see on the new gear, has pockets of quilt, which are little air pockets. This works during a structure fire, when you are under high heat, tis black outer PBI layer is fireproof and good to about 500 degrees. He know that the mayor went to Fire Ops today and got to wear some protective clothing in the burn building in Hartford. Typically, when they go to a fire, temperatures can be as high as 1,500 to 2,000 degrees. It is much cooler on the floor level. Again, the gear is built to operate at about 650-700 degrees. It can be worm in 900 degrees for about 45 seconds before it starts to degradate. That outer layer is about 25% of your protection. The two 932) inner layers are the other 75%. There is the vapor barrier and the little thermal layer with little pockets of air. So when the heat comes into the clothing, these individual layers keep the heat away from your body. That is what keep them protected. He states that they had a fire on Clinton Avenue two (2) weeks ago. One of the Fire Lieutenants got 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burn on the back of the leg at that fire. They had three (3) firefighters burned. Two (2) of the firefighters had minor burns. The 3<sup>rd</sup> had burns that were a little more significant. He went on Friday to the Bridgeport Burn Unit Center for a follow-up. He has to have an operation, which will be a minor skin graft. What happened in that fire, if you envision the pants in the same build, the hose stream hit the back of his leg and compressed the three (3) layers together. The heat that was being shielded in the thermal barrier pressed up against his skin and caused the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns. When the three (3) firefighters got burned, because they were

going to be transported and looked at the hospital, one of the protocols is to take the gear off and the State Fire Marshall's Office responds. What they do is look for this nameplate, which has the built date on it. He notes that this is his old jacket, which was built in March 2011 and was good for 10 years. They snap a picture of it and make sure it is compliant. Again, the three (3) firefighters, who were burned, were in their first sets of gear, which were compliant. If that had been in a non-compliant set, OSHA would have fined the City and the Fire Department. That is why they are working on replacing these non-compliant sets of gear and get everyone complaint. In the past, for year, they bought "X" sets of gear a year and it should be so that everybody would have two (2) compliant sets. For some reason, not enough sets were purchased and they ended up with non-compliance. Again, they had, with the Fire Department budget there is a fund balance so they are asking for the \$261K to come out of that fund balance.

Councilman Loffredo state that he has a follow-up. Chief Woron mentioned 59 sets of protective. At the end of the paragraph before that, in the presentation, the Chief had mentioned that in the current budget for FY21-22 were budgeted for eight (8) sets. He asks if they were purchased.

Chief Woron replies that they came in today. They purchased eight (8) sets, which would have been their normal purchase. They happened to come in today so we could bring them and show you what the new gear looks like. When you do all of the math, there are 42 sets on non-compliant gear. At the end of this calendar year, another 13 will become non-compliant. We are almost at the point where everyone's spare gear in non-compliant. This is why we are looking at getting everyone into a new set of gear so that they are complaint. Their current set will become their spare gear and we will be back on the regular business schedule so this does not happen again.

Councilman Loffredo states that he has one more questions. Regarding the funding source, from the fund balance transfer, transferring \$261K, what will be the balance if that money is transferred out?

Chief Woron replies that, over the past year, the City received some PILOT funding that went to the Fire Department, which they have not had for previous year, This coming budget year they will be getting some more PILOT funding. He believes that the money is available, the bulk of the PIOT funds, speaking with Finance, are being used to offset the mill rate in the Fire Department budget. It leaves around, prior to this, \$600K in that fund balance. Also they are earmarking some of hat for new fire apparatus that will be built.

Councilman Loffredo notes that is projected, the new apparatus fs for the next fiscal year.

Chief Woron replies that it is projected, but, unfortunately, apparatus is now at about a 500 day build. Once we put the order in for the fire apparatus, which they are looking to do for the next couple of months, it will take 500 days, which will probably be two (2) more budgets before that fire apparatus arrives.

Councilman Loffredo asks what they anticipated the cost of that fire apparatus to be.

Chief Woron replies that they are looking at \$1.1M. What they look to accomplish was due for a pumper to be replaced, the pumper that runs from the Cross Street Fire Station. To give an idea where they are, two (2) years ago, they built a pumper for \$525K. The new one will be about \$720K to \$740K. The spare ladder truck had to be decommissioned, the 26 year old ladder truck had major mechanical issues, so it is not worth fixing, He reiterate stat it was decommissioned. What they are looking to do now is to build an apparatus called a quint. It is basically afire pumper with a 75-foot ladder on it, so for another \$325K to \$350K, they will have a second ladder truck, a spare ladder, and a pumper on the same piece of equipment that is what we are looking to do.

Councilman Loffredo states that his last question has to deal with the three (3) fire districts in the community. We also have the City budget. He asks where do the dollars for the various items that have been mentioned – the clothing and apparatus and so forth -- where does the funding come from. Is it the Central Fire District tax or is it something that the City of Middletown (*Multiple speakers; inaudible*).

Chief Woron replies that the gear, part of the apparatus, is out of that PILOT finding into Middletown Fire Department, the City.

Councilman Loffredo asks where the balance comes form.

Chief Woron replies that balance is funded through the City or Fire Department budget. They ask for that approval.

Councilman Loffredo notes that there are two different tax rates, so he wonders . . . there are three (3) different tax rates for fire services.

Chief Woron replies, "Yes."

Councilman Loffredo asks, in terms of the responsibility, from a tax revenue point of view, these items, if not getting PILOT money or whatever plus they have the City General Fund, which covers all of the . . .

Chief Woron replies that with the PILOT fund and fund balance, that is what they are looking to do, not only take money from the fund balance for the apparatus, the gear, but also keep the Middletown Fire Department mill rate flat this coming budget even with the budget increase, which is contractual. The mill rate for the Fire Department will stay flat.



Councilman Loffredo said, to be more pointed, the revenue for these items is the responsibility of the taxpayers in this fire district in the City. Correct. The taxpayers in the South Fire District and those in the Westfield . . .

Chief Woron replies, “No,” adding it is from the Middletown Fire Department budget.

The Chair calls on Councilman Philip Pessina.

Councilman Pessina states that, as a follow-up, that gear will protect the firefighters from the carcinogens. Correct?

Chief Woron relies, “Absolutely,” adding that in a little packet that he prepared for the Council, he will take them though it. They get a structure fire. As the personnel come back from the fire, they are required to get out of that set of equipment, It has to be washed They have something called an extractor washer, which moves the toxins and carcinogens. Then all of the pieces are put on an air dryer. It takes about 24 hours to get it dried and put back together. They are now in their spare set if gear. They also are required to get out of their station uniform and that has to be laundered. They also have to shower. They have a special shampoo and soap, which is carcinogen removal soap and shampoo. Then the officers are required to log that this protective clothing was washed. The fill out a report, - 1<sup>st</sup> report of injury – for all of the people, who were introduced into that toxic environment. Then they are in the spare set of gear. This protect then somewhat from the toxins, but not the carcinogens, but not all. Actually, he and Deputy Chief Albert just rolled out seven (7) new cancer initiatives for the firemen. That was one of his visions, coming in as fire chief. Cancer in fire services is a big problem, adding that there are seven (7) different types of cancers that have anywhere from 300 to 500% great occurrence that the general public to contract. They are working to do everything that they can to reduce that exposure.

Councilman Pessina states that they should be commended for that.

Chief Woron replies, ‘Thank you.’

Councilman Pessina states that, with that said, is there a certain glove that the firefighters (*multiple speakers; inaudible*) to protect . . .

Chief Woron explains that they wear, as the Mayor was able to wear today, a leather glove. The newer set is a bit different. When you put your hand through, there is a little loop. That loop goes over the thumb and pulls a wristlet down. They wear the love over the wristlet, which prevents the wrist from being burned.

Councilman Pessina replies, “Perfect.”

Chief Woron states that it is a leather/suede fire glove. One piece of equipment, noting that the Mayor can vouch for it today, is a thermal nomex hood. You wear e glove, adding that these are the two (2) pieces of equipment that you actually feel the heat.

Councilman Pessina states that he experienced that when he went through his fire (*inaudible*).

Chief Woron state that Councilwoman Carta’s brother got burned at that fire, on his ears. That was with the helmet, the nomex flaps on the helmet, and a nomex hood.

Councilman Pessina states that, in essence, what we are voting for tonight is a holistic approach to safety.

Chief Woron replies, “Yes.”

Councilman Pessina continues, saying for firefighter, which is a good thing, He states that his last question is what the turn around is. In other words, if they pass it (the appropriation request) tonight, when do you expect . . .

Chief Woron replies that this came in in seven (7) weeks. This set was built in Dayton, Ohio. It is called Morning Pride that is the company. This is built in New Hampshire. This company now has about a 13-minth turnaround, noting that they lost half of their staff to the pandemic and they have not come back to work. This company is a much faster turnaround. They are identical specifications, identical equipment; just different manufacturers.

Councilman Pessina offers “Good Luck,” adding that they hope that everything comes in on time. Also, he commends the Chief and firefighters for the great job they are doing with these fire. It is disheartening to hear. They are concerned for the three (3) firefighters. The department is one of the best that he has seen.

Chief Woron replies, “Thank you.”

The Chair calls on Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell.

Councilwoman Blackwell states, in the spirit of full transparency, she had the opportunity to talk with Chief Woron today. She wanted to follow-up with Chief Woron because Item 7C is on this evening’s agenda and that is what we are talking about. First and foremost, she commends the Chief, saying for Councilwoman Carta’s brother and the other firemen, she is happy to hear that they are back at work.

Chief Woron replies, “Just the lieutenant,” adding that he had the operation. Once he has that, it should be about a four to five week recovery and he should be back to work.

Councilwoman Blackwell adds that we will keep him in our prayers, as well. She continues asking that the Chief, with respect to the PILOT funding, the payment in lieu of taxes, that funding was received last fiscal year and this fiscal year. She asks what the actual dollar amount was.

Chief Woron states that last year's dollar amount was somewhere in the vicinity of \$1.9M and this year is closer to \$2M. That money, although they come into the budget, they are not made available for purchases. Most of that money is used to offset taxes, the mill rate, and the budget. He believes that they have from the two (2) years about \$600K available for actual purchases through the budget process, adding that the rest is being used to offset the taxes and mill rate.

Councilwoman Blackwell notes that the Chief referenced that earlier. They also talked about having the 42 members in his correspondence to the Council: 42 members, who would have gear. She adds that she believes that he referenced that this evening, 10 years old. Ultimately, they will have 25 . . .

Chief Woron interjects, "extra sets," adding that then, when 2023 another 13 go away. What they will do is to take those spare sets of gear and keep them for when they send firefighters to recruit school at the Connecticut Fire Academy. They are there for 16 weeks, getting into the burn building a couple of times a week, getting dragged, climbing ladders so that gear takes a toll. They will keep the best sets of that gear for them. Most of it by the end of 2024 will be all over 10 years old and decommissioned.

Councilwoman Blackwell thanks Chief Woron, adding that she closes by thanking him for his demonstration. It is important this evening. He demonstrated this evening how important it is to have gear that is OSHA compliant.

Chief Woron, replies, "Absolutely," adding that so they know, the firefighters got burned on the 16<sup>th</sup>. At 8:00 on the 17<sup>th</sup>, OSHA was in their office, wanting to get a narrative on how they got burned, what happened. He adds that they were searching for someone, who got trapped in the building. He (OSHA agent) took a statement from the Chief and called the three (3) individuals to get statements from them, had compliance pictures of the gear, and spoke to the union, which he thought was unique. The Chief recounts that they (OSHA) asked the union if management was actually doing everything the way that they are supposed to: were they investigating whether they have proper gear, whether they have proper operating procedures. Apparently in some other parts of the State that is not happening. Chief Woron notes that the good news is that the middle of last week the compliance officer called to report that the case was being closed out with no additional need to go forward. It is a closed issue which is great. They (OSHA) looked at the training records. They (OSHA) looked at the command operating procedures to ensure that they run fires as they actually should be run. Chief Woron states that he was surprised that OSHA was here at 8:00 AM the next morning, but that is what it was.

Councilwoman Blackwell thanks Chief Woron for his leadership.

The Chair calls on Councilman Grady Faulkner, Jr.

Councilman Faulkner asks if Chief Woron is satisfied with current method of keeping up with the inspections of that equipment.

Chief Woron replies, "Yes," adding that in their cancer reduction policies, once a month one of lieutenants, who is assigned to each shift, it is their responsibility to inspect each person's gear on that shift to ensure that, not only is it clean and has no tears, rips, ready for duty, but they fill out a compliance report that comes back to Deputy Chief Albert. He explains that this process was added into their new procedures so that to be honest, when he started in the fire services in 1982 – he has been here 26 years – when they first started, dirty, grimy gear was like a badge of honor. The grimmer and more beat up it looked, the more salty you were. Here we are, all of these years later, and we find that is what was killing firefighters. We now want it to be clean. Even on our fire apparatus, they carry big body wipes, basically like a diaper wipe, but big. Firefighters are required to clean their areas of the body that take in the carcinogens and then, before they get back and shower, the gear is extremely dirty, they hose it off and put it in special bags to be brought back to the station so they don't go into the fire apparatus with it on and contaminate the fire apparatus.

Councilman Faulkner thanks Chief Woron.

The Chair states that Chief Woron has done a great job explaining this, adding that he can say this having participated in the fire ops.

Chief Woron states that, if anyone wants to come to a fire, they can jump in and we will have a set of gear available.

The Chair thanks Chief Woron and the team that made it possible. He knows that all of us are wishing the injured firefighters the best.

Chief Woron replies that he will pass that along.

The Chair notes that there are eight (8) minutes left in this Questions to Directors session. The Chair calls on Councilman Eugene Nocera.

Councilman Nocera asks Director of Water & Sewer Joseph Fazzino to the podium to talk about the \$40K appropriation request for transitioning treatment from chlorine to sodium. Councilman Nocera notes that this

was a unanimous approved at the Finance & Government Operation meetin last week. He asks Director Fazzino to explain to the Council what the appropriation is for and why it is needed.

Director Fazzino states that this past year they decommissioned the choline gas system at the John Roth Water Treatment Plant. This was a 2-ton cylinder of gas, which they are very hazardous. It was EPA's (Environmental Protection Agency) recommendation that they go to liquid hypochlorite, almost like bleach solution. With that, they did a pilot study. They went to DPH (Connecticut Department of Public Health) and had then approve the pilot study and decommission of the chlorine gas. With that, the hypochlorite solution is more expensive. They also had some difficulty with transportation this year. The cost escalated, there seems to be a shortage of hypochlorite nationally. With the budget that they had, they were caught short, so they are now looking for the \$40K to cover the costs for the remainder of the year and looking to appropriate that from the Water Fund Balance so the general budget will not see any of this expense.

The Chair calls on Councilman Vincent Loffredo.

Councilman Loffredo asks, in terms of going forward with next year's budget, he assumes they have budgeted for the choline gas and, now that they are moving to this. does the current budget reflect that.

Director Fazzino replies that, in the upcoming budget, they included the cost is in the chemical line item. They are also looking at doing the same thing at the reservoir, the Mount Higby complex. They currently use 150 lb. choline gas cylinders. They will be doing the same thing, going to DPH and do a pilot study to go and transfer that to the hypochlorite bleach solution also. They are working with staff, getting the budgets together, they have taken that into consideration.

Councilman Loffredo notes that they will have some discussion about the impact of that on future rates.

Director Fazzino replies, "Correct," adding that it is in the budget that they will be reviewing and in the rates for water and sewer. It is all in there.

The Chair notes that it is now 6:55PM. He calls on Councilman Philip Pessina.

Councilman Pessina (*inaudible*)

The Chair asks for Acting Director of Public Works Christopher Holden from WebEx.

Councilman Pessina notes that resolution Item 11A is taking care of an area, 31 Rapallo Avenue, they want to turn into a parking are. He asks if Acting Director Holden is familiar with that.

Acting Director Holden replies, "Yes."

Councilman Pessina asks Police Chief Erik Costa for a quick synopsis of the issues that have been occurring on Rapallo Avenue and their response.

Police Chief Costa replies that they have been directed that there has been trespassing on the premises, someone living inside the abandoned building on Rapallo Avenue. With that, they assign the street crime unit to investigate as well as acting on active patrol checks of the building. From time to time, homeless do go there. The police have been going there, giving the other resources as to where to stay for the night. They have been addressing some drug activity at the property as well. The building is in poor shape and he would consider it dangerous.

Councilman Pessina asks in his question for Acting Director Holden is, when this does pass, adding that he assumes it will pass, will Public Works be in charge with crating that parking area.

Acting Director Holden replies that they will work closely with Economic Development, who is taking the lead on that. He will be working closely with them to take care of that site.

Councilman Pessina state, noting that he is sure that the Chief will agree with him, that they will have appropriate lighting done there, at 39 Rapallo Avenue, which is adjacent to 31 Rapallo, there have been numerous quality of life violations and criminal activity. He asks if that parking lot will be well lit to try to help the Chief preclude some of the issues going on down there.

Acting Director Holden replies, "Yes," noting it will be well lit. Throughout the City in other parking lots and City facilities, they will be adding security cameras as well to be sure that safety and lighting in that area.

Councilman Pessina replies, "Thank you," adding that he knows that the Chief also knows that the people making those complaints are very happy with the police response. Councilman Pessina also thanks Acting Director Holden, adding that he would like to be updated on the Public Works Commission. Councilman Pessina explains that he is also on EDC (Economic Development Commission), so he will be watching this area closely to ensure that they do everything that the can to eradicate this type of unacceptable activity, especially on lower Rapallo Avenue. Thank you.

#### 4. Questions to Directors Workshop Closes

There being no further question, the Chair closes Questions to Director at 6:59 PM.

**5. Meeting adjourned**

Councilman Vincent Loffredo moves to adjourn. Councilwoman Jeanette Blackwell seconds the motion.

There being no discussion, the Chair calls for a voice vote. The motion to adjourn is approved unanimously by a vote of 11-0 (AYE: Councilmembers Blackwell, Carta, Faulkner, D. Ford, Gennaro, Loffredo, Mangiafico, McKeon, Nocera, Pessina, and Salafia; ABSENT: Councilman E. Ford). The matter is approved.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:00 PM

ATTEST:  
LINDA S.K. REED,  
COMMON COUNCIL CLERK

*K: review/ minutes/ 2022 April 04 – Questions to Directors – 04 April 2022*